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NSC BRIEFING

5 January 1961

LAOS

- I. Following are the conclusions of the Watch Committee on 4 January:
- A. With continuing substantial Bloc logistic support, particularly airlift, the Kong Le/Pathet Lao forces have achieved a tactical capability of bringing substantial pressure against government forces in a number of areas throughout Laos.
 - B. In the event of a Pathet Lao move against such major points as Luang Prabang, Vientiane or Pak Sane, the Boun Oum government will probably ask for overt outside assistance.
 - C. Although the Bloc probably prefers that the Laotian conflict not be expanded beyond its present scale, it apparently is determined to maintain such military pressure as is required to achieve at a minimum a "neutralized" Laos. The Bloc is probably prepared to increase its military commitments to the extent required to counter such outside military support as might be provided to the Phoumi forces.
- II. As of this morning, Kong Le/Pathet Lao forces continuing to maintain strong pressure against government troops in northern Laos.
- A. Clandestine Pathet Lao radio claims their forces have demolished and now control the Pak Sane-Vientiane road.
 - B. No confirmation yet, but this could indicate area of next major Pathet-Lao activity.

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